

Remarks

Claims 1-26 are in the application, of which claims 5-16 have been withdrawn from examination by the examiner.

The examiner has allowed claims 17-21 and 23-26.

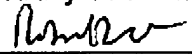
The examiner's notification that prior claims 3 and 4 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form is noted and, accordingly, the subject matter of claim 2 has been incorporated in claim 1 and claims 3 and 4 cancelled. A minor clerical error has also been corrected in claim 1.

Authorization is given to cancel the withdrawn claims on allowance.

This amendment is made merely to expedite allowance and without agreement with or admission of the examiner's position. Accordingly, the right to file a continuing application directed to the subject matter of the claims prior to amendment (and to any non-elected claim, now cancelled) is reserved.

Favorable reconsideration of the application is requested.

Respectfully submitted

  
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The undersigned certifies that this paper together with any attachments is transmitted by facsimile to Commissioner of Patents, P.O.Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on January 16, 2004.

By  Date: Jan 16 2004